

Commercial Building (Foster Building)
102-104½ East Main Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-86

HABS
IND.
39-MAD.
10-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-86

COMMERCIAL BUILDING
(FOSTER BUILDING)

Location: 102, 104, 104-1/2 East Main Street (southeast corner of Main and West Streets), Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana

USGS Madison West Quadrangle Map, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.640800.4288500

Present Owners: Louise Eckert Johnson, 102
John Petrakos, 104, 104-1/2

Present Occupants: Harry Marcus, Shoes and Clothing, 102
Gracie Ellan Beauty Salon, 104-1/2
Unoccupied, 104

Present Use: Shops, storage, and unused space

Statement of Significance: The Foster Building was erected ca. 1860-70 and has the best cast-iron facade of Madison's late nineteenth-century commercial architecture. Most of the city's five-block commercial row development is finished with sheet-metal and cast-iron facades. This structure, however, stands out as the most ornate and finest in design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1860-70. City tax records prior to 1900 do not help in revealing a clear date of construction. The city directory for 1867 refers to stores on the site and deed records for this site indicate that buildings were standing by 1873. Construction of brick commercial buildings first began in Madison in the early 1830s on Jefferson and Mulberry Streets. By the 1850s, Main Street was in the process of being developed. Two major construction phases seem to have occurred on Main: The first circa 1860; the second circa 1875, including remodeling and new construction. Since extensive use of cast-iron and sheet-metal facades on buildings was in vogue in Madison by 1875, its use on the Foster Building prior to 1870 is clearly possible.

2. Architect: No information available.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lot number 78 "Old Town" is within the original plat of Madison which was recorded on June 1, 1812 and is the lot upon which the structure stands.

Original and later owners prior to 1905 are listed in the following chain of title to the land. Records cited are in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.

- 1815 Deed, October 14, 1815, recorded October 14, 1815 in Book A, page 136. Jonathan Dunn to David McClure.
- 1823 Deed, March 11, 1823, recorded March 18, 1823 to Book C, page 436. Lot only. David McClure and Ruth, his wife, to Victor and John King.
- 1873 Deed, April 29, 1873, recorded March 18, 1873 in Book 35, page 93. Part of lot 78, "being same premises now occupied by Foster and Todd," for consideration of \$7350.
- 1895 Deed, December 21, 1895, recorded April 15, 1895 in Book 64, page 521. Consideration of \$10,000, Harvey B. Foster to Genevieve Foster.
- 1905 Deed, March 17, 1905, recorded March 17, 1905 in Book 76, page 576. Genevieve R. Foster to Jacob N. Laurer and Edward Laurer.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known. Madison had its own iron foundries and sheet-metal shops, but little is known about their products. Metal elements for building were imported for use in Madison from Ohio, Kentucky and other cities in Indiana.
5. Original plan and construction: This brick structure commands the attention of its site by virtue of the unified appearance of the facade. It measures 99'-6" (eight-bay front) x 84' and is three stories. The shops differ in length and width as a functional response to the corner site. The largest shop is at the intersection of Main and West Streets while the most narrow is furthest in. The back of each shop contained a storeroom, coal room and staircase leading to the basement. The second-floor spaces were rented as offices, apartments and meeting rooms.

The decorative cast-iron facade makes this building particularly distinctive. The floral and acanthus leaf motif of the Corinthian capitals at street level, the window caps of the upper levels, and the cornice with scrolled brackets are similar to designs published by the prominent late nineteenth-century architectural iron works manufacturers.

6. Alterations and additions: The most drastic change has been the removal of the cast-iron work from number 102.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Harvey B. Foster was the principal and longest owner and occupant of the building. In 1867 Foster and Todd, Booksellers and Stationers were listed at this address, and remained here for at least a generation.

In 1887, the book and stationary shop was listed under the name H. B. Foster and T. N. Calloway. Harry B. Foster was President of the Madison Gas Company and a manager of the Grand Opera House; Thomas N. Calloway was the founder of the Opera House.

A stationary store occupied 104-1/2 during the 1890s. Later, the store included a cigar and smoke shop and was run by Charles Alling.

Jacob and Edward Laurer, father and son, bought the Foster Building in 1905. They moved their tailoring and clothing business from a shop further west on Main Street to this one and remained here until 1932.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Interview: Louise Eckert Johnson, Madison, August 14 and 16, 1971

"Invoice Book of Albert S. Alling, 104-1/2 East Main Street, Madison, Indiana. Opened July 19, 1894."
Invoices continue through 1894. Found in the attic of 104-1/2 Main Street, Madison.

Jefferson County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Edwards' Annual Directory to the Inhabitants, . . . in
City of Madison for 1867. St. Louis and New York:
Edwards and Co., 1867.

Edmondson Bros. Madison Directory for 1875. Cincinnati:
Edmondson Bros., 1887.

Madison Illustrated Directory, 1887-88. Dubuque: Sutton
Publishing Co., 1887.

"Madison Daily Courier," May 31, 1850.

Prepared by Philip Dole
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1971

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Historic Madison. The structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1971 under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Melvin M. Rotsch (Texas A & M University), with student assistant architects John G. Albers, (University of Florida), Bruce E. Lynch (Washington University), H. T. Moriarity (University of Texas), John M. Szubski (Princeton University), and architectural historian Philip Dole (University of Oregon), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The data was edited in November 1978 in the HABS Office by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1971.